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**LADY AUDLEY'S
SECRET.**

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NEW YORK.**

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LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS

FROM MISS BRADDON'S POPULAR NOVEL

BY

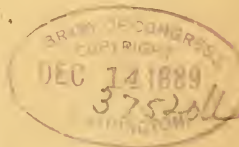
C. H. HAZLEWOOD

NEW AMERICAN EDITION, CORRECTLY REPRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL AUTHORIZED ACTING EDITION, WITH THE ORIGINAL CAST OF THE CHARACTERS, SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS, TIME OF REPRESENTATION, DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES, SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOTS, DIAGRAMS OF THE STAGE SETTINGS, SIDES OF ENTRANCE AND EXIT, RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS, EXPLANATION OF THE STAGE DIRECTIONS, ETC., AND ALL OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

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NEW YORK
HAROLD ROORBACH
PUBLISHER



PR4989

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LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

As first performed at the Victoria Theatre, Monday, May 25, 1863.

SIR MICHAEL AUDLEY (*of Audley Court*).....Mr. R. H. Lingham.
ROBERT AUDLEY (*his Nephew*).....Mr. Gustavus W. Blake.
GEORGE TALBOYS (*the Husband of —*).....Mr. Walter Roberts.
LUKE MARKS (*A Drunken Gamekeeper*).....Mr. George Yarnold.

COUNTRYMEN, MORRIS DANCERS.

LADY AUDLEY (*Wife of Sir Michael*).....Miss Maria Daly.
ALICIA AUDLEY (*his Daughter*).....Miss Violet Campbell.
PHOEBE MARKS (*Lady Audley's Maid*).....Miss Lydia Foote.

VILLAGERS.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION—ONE HOUR AND A QUARTER.

SIX MONTHS ARE SUPPOSED TO ELAPSE BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND ACTS.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS.

LADY AUDLEY, a young woman of 24, is the second wife of SIR MICHAEL AUDLEY who is celebrating his seventieth birthday with merrymaking and good cheer. His nephew ROBERT, a lover of ALICIA, SIR MICHAEL'S daughter by his first wife, arrives late at the festivities, accompanied by his friend GEORGE TALBOYS. While laying plans to further her ambition and interest, LADY AUDLEY is confronted by TALBOYS, who recognizes in her the wife whom he had mourned as dead. It appears that during TALBOYS' absence abroad, his wife, impatient of her bonds, had caused intelligence of her death to be sent to him, changed her name, entered the family of a gentleman as governess, devoted all her energies to winning the affections of old SIR MICHAEL, and had finally gained the summit of her ambition. TALBOYS, maddened at his wife's treachery, determines at once to bring her to justice. She alternately implores his silence and threatens to crush him with the power of

gold, but finally agrees to follow him. A cunning device for relief suggesting itself, LADY AUDLEY pretends sudden faintness and calls for water; and while TALBOYS draws it for her she strikes him down and pushes him into the well. Exulting in her escape from justice, she retires in triumph without observing LUKE MARKS who has been a silent witness of her crime.

Six months elapse without any clue to the strange disappearance from Audley Court. ROBERT, plunged in melancholy, spares no effort to learn the fate of his friend. LADY AUDLEY, meanwhile, has kept her secret with calm demeanor, though she cannot banish the fatal meeting from her thoughts. In the interim LUKE has married LADY AUDLEY's maid and opened a public house. He now confronts her with his knowledge of her secret and demands a large price for his silence, which LADY AUDLEY promises to take to his inn that night. No sooner has she resumed her mask of composure than ROBERT, now feeling sure that his friend has perished treacherously, openly charges LADY AUDLEY with being concerned in TALBOYS' death, and war is declared between the two. LADY AUDLEY now arouses SIR MICHAEL's jealousy against ROBERT, with the result that the latter is dismissed from the house; but recognizing his enemy's hand in the matter, he resolves to remain in the neighborhood, and finds shelter in LUKE's inn where his suspicions are confirmed by his host's strange conduct and incautious talk. LADY AUDLEY, on going to the inn with the promised price of LUKE's silence, is deeply disturbed at finding the two men in secret conversation. Realizing that her exposure is imminent, she sets fire to the house after ROBERT has retired and LUKE is in a drunken stupor, with the intent of destroying both of her persecutors at once, and returns home to find SIR MICHAEL dying. But both victims escape from the burning building, though LUKE dies without wholly betraying LADY AUDLEY. ROBERT then denounces her just as TALBOYS enters, to the consternation of all, after an illness and silence of months. The guilty woman, now exposed and scorned, goes mad and dies, imploring pity for herself and oblivion for her secret.

COSTUMES.

SIR MICHAEL. ACT I.—Light summer suit; low shoes; fancy socks; gray hair and beard. ACT II.—Black frock coat and trousers; white waistcoat and white cravat.

ROBERT. ACT I.—Rough sack suit; derby hat. ACT II.—Black suit; cutaway coat; silk hat with mourning band; black gloves and neck-scarf.

TALBOYS. Ordinary dark business suit; derby hat.

LUKE. ACT I.—Velveteen coat; fancy waistcoat, cord breeches; gings; soft felt hat. ACT II.—Rough business suit.

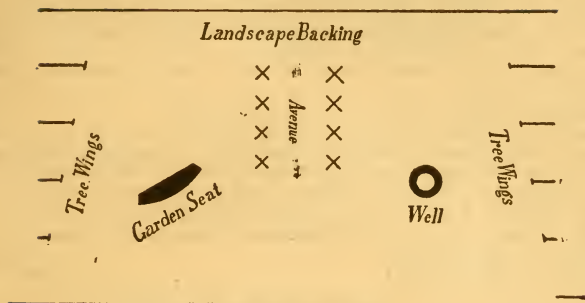
LADY AUDLEY. ACT I.—Light summer costume. ACT II.—1 morning dress; cloak and hood.

ALICIA. ACT I.—1st dress, riding habit; 2d dress, bright morning costume. ACT II.—Dark colored morning dress.

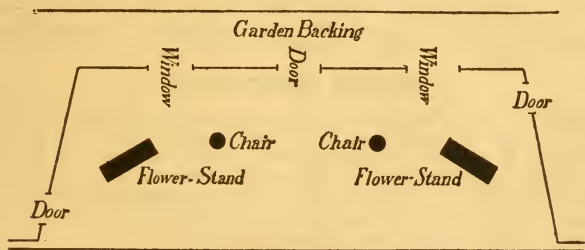
PHŒBE. ACT I.—Fancy calico dress; linen collar and cuffs; white cap and apron. ACT II.—Plain dark attire; white linen collar and cuffs; hat and shawl.

STAGE SETTINGS.

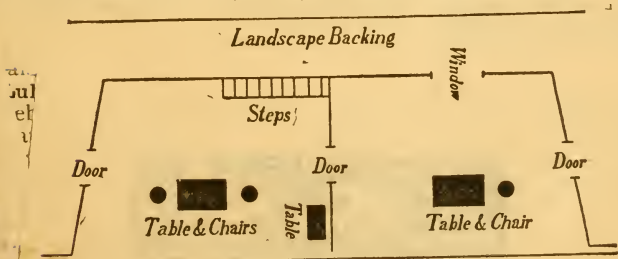
ACT I.



ACT II.—Scene I.



ACT II.—Scene III.



SCENE PLOT.

ACT I.—Landscape in 5 G. All entrances open. An avenue of trees leading up c. Garden seat R. Set well L.

ACT II. *Scene I.*—Conservatory set in 3 G., backed with Garden drop in 4 G. Door c., and stained windows R. C. and L. C. in flat. Doors R. 1 E., and L. 3 E. Flower-stands R. and L., bearing flowers in pots. Chairs, R. C. and L. C.

Scene II.—Exterior of Inn, in 1 G. Door in flat.

Scene III.—Double scene of two plain chambers divided by partition running down from c. of flat. Flat in 3 G. Landscape backing in 4 G. In the R. room, a table and two chairs c., and a smaller table down against the partition. Flight of steps at back, ascending into a loft above. Door R. 2 E. In the L. room, a table and chair c. Window in left flat. Door L. 2 E. Door in partition, opposite 2nd entrance.

Scene IV.—A road in 1 G.

Scene V.—Same as Act I.

PROPERTIES.

ACT I.—Money for PHŒBE. Miniature for ALICIA.

ACT II.—Flowers in pots. Scissors and poignard for LADY AUDLEY. Miniature and letters for Robert. Bank-note for SIR MICHAEL. Bell off stage. Door key. Two candles in candlesticks. Pipe (lighted) for LUKE. Jug and two mugs. Cigars in case for TALBOYS.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

Observing, the player is supposed to face the audience. R. means right; L., left; c., centre; R. C., right of centre; L. C., left of centre; D. F., door in the flat or scene running across the back of the stage; R. F., right side of the flat; L. F., left side of the flat; R. D., right door; L. D., left door; 1 E., first entrance; 2 E., second entrance; U. E., upper entrance; 1, 2 or 3 G., first, second or third grooves; UP STAGE, toward the back; DOWN STAGE, toward the footlights.

R. R. C. C. L. C. L.

NOTE.—The text of this play is correctly reprinted from the original authorized acting edition, without change. The introductory matter has been carefully prepared by an expert, and is the only part of this book protected by copyright.





LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET.

ACT I.

Scene.—*The Lime Tree Walk ; an ancient Hall, R. ; the lime trees form an avenue up to the hall which is seen in the distance.*

Enter PHŒBE MARKS, followed by LUKE her cousin, from R., he is dressed in velveten coat, flowered waistcoat, and cord breeches and gaiters, and has a rough dissipated appearance.

Phœbe. I tell you, Marks, you mustn't come here.

Luke. And I tell'ee I will. You be my sweetheart, bound in promise to marry me these six years, and 'taint likely when I know you've a good place that I'm likely to cry off. You've been rising in servitude o' late ; first you were housemaid, then parlor-maid, now you be lady's maid, at the top o' the servant's tree like ; so as that be the case, I, as your sweetheart, ought to reap some of the fruits. I wants some money. (*holds out his hand*)

Phœbe. (*gives money*) I wish you'd work, Luke, instead of skulking about from one public house to another all day long ; I am ashamed of you.

Luke. I'll reform when I marry you, Phœbe.

Phœbe. A poor prospect I shall have in marrying you, I'm afraid.

Luke. Well, I know I'm not over steady ; but it riles me, Phœbe, to see the luck o' some folks ; look at Lady Audley, for instance,—~~why~~ what was she a couple of years ago ? why only a governess, a teacher of French and the *pianny*, and now she be mistress o' Audley Court. Ecod, she has played her cards well, to get the right side o' Sir Michael ; why he must be old enough to be her grandfather.

Phœbe. Quite old enough ; but he's very fond of her, and she's
/ fond of him.

Luke. Aye, it be to her interest to seem so. Now you appear to be very fond o' me, but I don't know whether you be or no. Bah ! women be strange cattle.

Phœbe. You have no cause to say so as regards me, Luke. Any girl but me would have broken off with you long ago.

Luke. Well, well, I know I have been goin' the racket ; but I'll reform, I'll leave this place and all my evil ways and companions. I should like to go to some o' those places abroad, Phœbe, where they say land can be got for the mere asking ; it be expensive to reach there, that's the worst on't. But I say, Phœbe, (*going up to her*) one o' them diamond earrings o' my lady's, or one of Sir Michael's rings as he wears would fetch a little fortune if turned into money. Couldn't you manage to lay hold o' one, give it to me, and——

Phœbe. For shame, Luke ! You are my cousin, 'tis true ; but if you dare to tempt me again with such wicked words, I'll treat you as the greatest stranger in the world. A fine prospect I have to look forward to, it seems ! This is my master, Sir Michael Audley's birthday, and all the folks are in their best but you. Go, Luke, go ; for if either my master or mistress see you—what will they think ?

Luke. Let 'em think what they like. Who cares for they ?

Phœbe. I do, if *you* don't.

Luke. Well, I'll go down to the inn at Mount Stanning, and come up and see you again by-and-by. I hear, you're going to have fine merry-making up here, morris-dancing, fiddling, capering, and what's better than all, good drinking, from the old ale in the baronet's cellars. I'll spruce myself up a bit, and make one of the party. All be welcome on a day like this, eh ?

Phœbe. All who behave themselves.

Luke. Oh ! I'll behave myself. (*aside*) While people's eyes be on me, and when they bean't, off I go into the woods to see how my snares be, as I set for the rabbits and hares. (*aloud*) Good-bye, my wench ; don't you fret about me. It's a long lane as has no turning, and I'll be another man afore long ; marry thee and drive thee to market in my shay cart, singing

“Gee wo, Dobbin, gee wo, Dobbin, gee wo, Dobbin,

Gee up and gee wo.”

Exit, E.—

Phœbe. Poor Luke, I'm afraid you're almost too far gone to mend. I'd give him up altogether, if I were not afraid it would drive him to drink more than ever. I can't help remembering he's my cousin, and that I'm bound to him by a promise to my poor dead mother. She always wished we should marry. So I must keep my word, and trust for the best. (*music and distant shouts*) Ah, here come my master and mistress ; how happy they seem, happier than I can ever be with Luke Marks, I'm afraid.

Enter SIR MICHAEL AUDLEY, *a gray-headed gentleman of 70, arm in arm with LADY AUDLEY, supposed to be about 24.*

Lady Audley. (*to* SIR MICHAEL) Come along, come along, my dear Sir Michael, you shall have no rest to day. I'll take you all over the park and grounds, to see all the festivities I've arranged in honor of my dear husband—my pet—my treasure—my only joy! (*patting his cheeks*)

Sir M. Bless you, my dear, bless you! What a happy old man you make me! The last two years of my life has been a new existence; with you, my second wife, all is bliss, and domestic happiness—you make this earth heaven to me. The first Lady Audley made it the other place! Ah! I wish we had met thirty years ago.

Lady A. Thirty years ago? Why, my dear Sir Michael, I was not born then.

Sir M. Then you ought to have been—on purpose to have saved me from making a fool of myself with a woman who only married me for my money and measured her love for me according to the measure of my acres.

Lady A. Ah! here is Phœbe! Why, what's the matter, girl—you seem out of spirits?

Phœbe. I am, my lady—my cousin Luke has been here, and I was so afraid you would see him; he's a deal of trouble to me, my lady—I wish he'd settle down to something.

Sir M. Ah! the fellow's a wild blade, and always was; we'd better put the young people in some way of business, I think, my lady.

Lady A. No, I can't spare Phœbe at present. I'll speak to Luke and he shall alter his ways—or he shall lose Phœbe. But this is a day of enjoyment; away with business, and let the time be spent in pleasure. (*pipe and tabor without*) Ah! here come the morris dancers; you see I have not forgotten your taste for rural sports, my dear.

Sir M. You forget nothing, Lady Audley, that can minister to my amusement. (*he leads her to a garden seat, R.*)

Enter VILLAGERS, *followed by MORRIS DANCERS, C., who perform a dance and exeunt.*

Sir M. (*coming down with LADY A.*) There, my lady; isn't that more inspiring than seeing a lot of dowdies walking through a quadrille, as though it were a toil to them, without either a smile in their faces or a bend in their bodies. Old English pastimes for ever! Yes, yes, a country gentleman I was born, and a country gentleman I shall die.

Lady A. Die? Oh, my dear, dear Sir Michael! pray don't talk of dying—whatever should I do without you!

Phœbe. (*aside*) Do? why soon bid adieu to a country life, I warrant.

Sir M. Punctuality is one of my jog-trot notions; but it seems my nephew don't partake of that virtue, for he promised to be here first thing this morning, and he's not arrived yet. Ah! here comes my daughter, I wonder if she has seen him.

Enter ALICIA. *down avenue, C., dressed in a riding habit.*

Well, have you seen anything of him, my dear?

Alicia. No, pa', and it's shameful, that it is. I've been riding along the high road in the hope of meeting him, but no, not a sign of the fellow could I see. Oh! I was so vexed that I had to whip my horse along like lightning, to get off my ill humor.

Lady A. (*crosses to her*) Why my dear daughter-in-law, how cruel you are—why should your poor horse suffer for your truant lover? Oh, fie! fie! I'm ashamed of you.

Alicia. One can't always be smiles and honey as you are, my dear mother-in-law. It's better to let one's temper come out at once, than brood over unpleasant things in secret.

Lady A. (*aside*) What does she mean by that? (*aloud*) Oh! my dear, you'll take these things in a calmer light by-and-bye—marriage is a wonderful cure for lovers' impatience.

Sir M. Have you found it so, my dear?

Lady A. (*smiling*) Oh, no, my dear, there is no rule without an exception.

Alicia. (*aside*) Leave her alone for finding an answer.

Sir M. (*to ALICIA*) You'd better go and dress for dinner, my dear. We shall have Robert here before you are ready, if you are not speedy.

Alicia. I don't care whether he comes or not, since he has stayed so long.

Lady A. Oh yes, you do! Come, come, don't be a ~~child~~ child, there's a dear. *Crossed*

Alicia. Child indeed! I'm as old as you are!

Lady A. Why, so you are; but I forget that, when I am call'd your mother—there, there, now go and banish that frown from your brow, and meet the dear one of your heart, with one of those sunny smiles that so become your dear little face. Shall Phœbe go with you?

Alicia. No thank you, my dear mother-in-law; keep to your servant, and I will keep to mine. (*aside*) I can't bear that Phœbe.

Exit, L. U. E.

Sir M. (*calling after her*) Make a quick toilette, my dear, or you'll have him here before you.

Lady A. What a spirit the dear child has.

Sir M. Just like her mother, she was all spirit, (*sighs*) as I found to my sorrow.

Lady A. Come, come—look not into the gloomy past while

the bright future is before us. I've a hundred things to show you—the lake—the new summer-houses—the lawn, and I don't know what.

Sir M. My dear light-hearted wife, I don't believe you ever knew a moment's sorrow in your life.

Lady A. Ah, my dear, we may read *faces* but not *hearts*.

Sir M. And could I read yours I'm sure I should see——

Lady A. That which would change your opinion of me, perhaps.

Sir M. Not it, I warrant, for if ever the face was an index of the mind, I believe yours to be that countenance.

Lady A. (*aside*) We may have two faces. (*aloud*) Bless you ! bless you for your confidence ! my kind—my good—my dearly loved old darling. (*going with him up, C.*) Come, come, come !

Exeunt, C. and L.

Phœbe. My lady's a mystery—what a change this marriage has made in her prospects ; from a poor governess she has become the mistress of Audley Court. We lived in the same family together, and she was kind enough to bring me here as an upper servant. She didn't forget an old friend, and I shall ever remember her for it.

Enter ROBERT AUDLEY and GEORGE TALBOYS, R.

Robert. (*coming down L. C., with GEORGE*) Come along, George, I'm behind as usual.

George. That was my fault, meeting with me has detained you.

Robert. Don't mention it, old fellow, I am always glad to meet an old acquaintance. (*sees PHŒBE*) Ah ! one of the servants of the hall, I presume. (*to PHŒBE.*)

Phœbe. Yes, sir.

Robert. Have you been long in my uncle's service ?

Phœbe. Shortly after his marriage with the second Lady Audley.

Robert. Who'd have thought my uncle would have married again ? I've been abroad and never met my new aunt. How does she become her new dignity ? Is she a favorite with the servants—with yourself, for instance ?

Phœbe. We are old acquaintances.

Robert. Indeed !

Phœbe. Oh, yes, very old acquaintances—in fact we were servants in the same family.

Robert. Ah ! then you must have seen a great deal of her I expect.

Phœbe. I have, sir.

Robert. And is she worthy of being my uncle's wife, do you think ?

Phoebe. If I were to tell you my thoughts, you'd be as wise as I am. For any information concerning your new aunt, Lady Audley, I respectfully beg leave to refer you to your uncle.

Curtsies and exit, L. U. E.

George. The maid and the mistress are firm friends, that's plainly to be seen. Heigho ! I'm almost sorry now I came with you, for I am no company for any one since I heard of my wife's death—that wife so loved—so cherished and so young. Robert, my marriage with her was one of impulsive passion. I had two thousand pounds when I first met her. I was an indolent, easy-going fellow, and thought the money would last forever. We travelled on the Continent, and I needn't tell you how soon the money was gone—we returned to England—a relation procured me an appointment abroad—I left my wife in England and sailed to perform the duties of my office. When I possessed the means to send for her, I wrote to my wife—the letter was unanswered. I sent a second—a third, it was then I received——

Robert. A reply from her of course.

George. No, no, my friend ; but a newspaper with a paragraph surrounded by a black margin ; it caught my eye at once, and I read the words, " Died in London, May 2nd, 1860, Helen, wife of George Talboys, aged 20." Oh, Bob, what a blow was that to me. I was toiling—saving for her—her who was my life—my soul—my joy ! and woke from my dream of hope to know my darling wife was dead—dead—dead !

Robert. My poor friend, it must, indeed, have been a shock to you.

George. It crushed me for a time ; but I was obliged to fulfil my duties, or sacrifice my appointment. But during all that time, Bob, the scorching sun of India was nothing to the fire that was raging here—here—here ! (*pressing his hand to his forehead*)

Robert. Come, come, cheer up, old boy, cheer up. It was through no fault of yours that your wife perished so young.

George. Sometimes I think it *was* all through me. I'd no business to marry the girl, if I hadn't either the industry or the means to keep her as she deserved. *Now*, what atonement can I make ? only this, seek out her grave, and raise over it a monument, that shall cause her memory to be respected—her fate to be pitied.

Re-enter ALICIA, L. U. E.

Alicia. (*to ROBERT*) My very punctual and attentive cousin, what very excellent manners you have, to keep a lady waiting in this way.

Robert. My dear Alicia, it was not my fault.

Alicia. Then whose was it, pray ?

George. Mine, madam. I am an old friend of Mr. Audley's ; we had not met for many years ; we had many things to speak of ; time flew by rapidly, and as I have retarded him from his appointment, let me take the blame from his shoulders to mine.

Alicia. Then I forgive him and you too. This is my father's birthday, sir ; so we shall be most happy to have your society, sir.

George. I fear I shall be poor company.

Alicia. O ! my mother-in-law, Lady Audley, will soon rally you ; she has a wonderful spirit, and a most accommodating temper.

Robert. What is she like, Alicia ?

Alicia. Oh ! a perfect wax doll, as regards complexion ; fair as the day when in a good temper, but black as night if she can't rule anybody as she likes.

Robert. And, does she rule you ?

Alicia. I should like to catch her at it ! I'm as old as she is, and quite as much spirit when I think I'm put upon, but I've her likeness here, (*shows miniature*) painted on ivory—a speaking resemblance I can assure you. (*gives it to ROBERT*)

Robert. (*looking at it*) Fair as the day, as you observe ; a gentle innocent-looking face enough—look, George. (*gives it to GEORGE and talks aside with ALICIA*)

George. (*aside*) How can they think I shall feel interested ? (*looks at it and starts*) What is this ? *Her* face ! *Hers* ! Good heaven ! what can this mean ? It is the likeness of my wife ! some fearful mystery is here. Does she live ?—live to be the wife of Sir Michael Audley ? Oh, for some means to be certain ! Let me not be rash—not a word to Robert at present. I'll linger in the park ; and if I have been deceived by her, woe to the traitress—woe—woe, and punishment !

Exit, C. and L.

Robert. (*to ALICIA*) Is it possible my uncle is really so infatuated with her ?

Alicia. It's a fact, I can assure you. If I call *her* a wax doll, my father is wax itself, for she can mould him any way she pleases.

Robert. What a good easy soul the old boy is, eh, George ? Why he's gone !

Alicia. A very well-behaved young man, Robert ; he thought perhaps we had something to say to each other in secret. I suppose he's sauntered up to the house.

Robert. Most likely—let us follow. (*as they go up they meet LADY AUDLEY, C.*)

Alicia. (*introducing them*) Lady Audley, Mr. Robert Audley.

Lady A. (*taking his hand*) My dear Mr. Audley, I have been expecting you with the utmost impatience. I hope, sincerely hope, you are quite well.

Alicia. (*aside*) Too civil by half.

Robert. Perfectly well, I thank your ladyship. I hope my uncle is the same ?

Lady A. The dear old darling is in excellent health, and on this his seventieth birthday is as hale and hearty a specimen of a fine old English gentleman as you will find in Essex. He'll be delighted to see you, he's been talking about you all day. Ah ! Mr. Audley, you don't know the favorite you are with him, but I don't wonder at it when I see you, for—don't think I flatter, Mr. Audley—there's honesty and frankness apparent in every feature of your manly countenance.

Robert. (*bowing*) Oh really, Lady Audley, I——

Alicia. (*aside*) I don't like her being so familiar. I always dread mischief, when she talks in that manner.

Lady A. But come, I will accompany you to Sir Michael.

Alicia. No, *I'll* accompany him, we have something to talk about—something that concerns ourselves *only*. (*aside*) I think that's a pretty broad hint for her.

Lady A. Oh, just as you please, my dears, I shall see you at dinner.

Robert. Most certainly. Adieu for the present.

Lady A. Adieu ! don't detain him too long, my dear, or I shall be very very cross with you.

Alicia. How kind of you to be suddenly so friendly, mamma. (*aside*) Come along, Robert, I think the less you two meet the better. I saw you look at her.

Robert. Why, my dear, I——

Alicia. I know you did, and I don't like it. Come along, sir.
Exeunt, C. and L.

Lady A. (*throwing off her levity of manner, and reflecting*) It must be my aim to stand well with this young man ; he is my husband's favorite, I know. I manage Sir Michael as I like, and if his nephew gains too firm a hold upon him, he may prove a dangerous rival in my path. I live now for ambition and interest, to mould the world and its votaries to my own end. Once I was fool enough to wed for love. Now I have married for wealth. What a change from the wife of George Talboys to the wife of Sir Michael Audley ! My fool of a first husband thinks me dead. Oh excellent scheme, oh cunning device, how well you have served me. (*GEORGE enters at back, and comes down silently to her side*) Where can he be now ? Still in India no doubt. He is mourning my death perhaps—ha, ha ! Why I have only just begun to live—to taste the sweets of wealth and power. If I am dead to George Talboys, he is dead to me. Yes, I am well rid of him, and on this earth we meet no more.

George. (*touching her on the shoulder*) Yes, we do.

Lady A. (*turning with a shriek*) George Talboys !

George. Aye, your husband!—the husband of her who now calls herself Lady Audley! Really, for a woman who has been dead and buried, you look remarkably well, my dear.

Lady A. I am lost!

George. You turn away; this is but a cold welcome from a wife to her husband, after a three years' separation. You are a traitress, madam!

Lady A. One word before we proceed further. Is it to be peace or war between us?

George. War! war to the last! war till I see thee placed in a felon's dock and sentenced by the judge.

Lady A. Be prudent; remember, I am now rich.

George. But your reign will soon be over. What will be your position, do you think, when the world knows all? What will your noble husband think, when he finds you are the wife of another man?

Lady A. Oh, spare me, spare me!

George. Spare you, no! I will expose you, woman—you whom—

Lady A. Whom you left here in poverty and dependence—whom you promised to write to from India.

George. And to whom I did write.

Lady A. Never!

George. I say, yes!

Lady A. And I say, no! I tell you, not one letter reached my hands; I thought myself deserted, and determined to make reprisals on you; I changed my name; I entered the family of a gentleman as governess to his daughters; became the patient drudge for a miserable stipend, that I might carry my point—that point was to gain Sir Michael Audley's affections; I did so, I devoted all my energies, all my cunning, to that end! and now I have gained the summit of my ambition, do you think I will be cast down by you, George Talboys? no, I will conquer you or I will die!

George. And what means will you take to conquer me? What power will you employ to silence me?

Lady A. The power of gold.

George. Gold! gold purchased by your falsehood—gold in my hand that has polluted yours, for which you have sold yourself to a man old enough to be your grandsire! No, false woman, I seek not a bride, but for justice!

Lady A. Listen to me. I have fought too hard for my position to yield it up tamely. Take every jewel, every penny I have and leave me! henceforth I can be nothing to you, nor you to me. Our first meeting was a mistake, it was the ardent passion of a boy and girl, which time has proved to have been ill-advised on either side—I am no longer the weak confiding girl you first

knew me—no, I am a resolute woman—and where I cannot remove an obstacle I will crush it.

George. Or be crushed.

Lady A. You will turn informer then ?

George. No, avenger—the avenger of my wrongs—the punisher of a heartless, deceitful wife.

Lady A. (*with a sardonic smile*) Then you will war with a woman ?

George. To the death !

Lady A. (*starting—aside*) “Death ! death !” Aye that is the word—that is the only way of escape. (*aloud*) Then you are as merciless—

George. As you are crafty. Last night the luxurious mansion of Audley Court sheltered you—to-night a prison’s roof will cover your head.

Lady A. I defy you—scorn you—spurn you for a vindictive fool. Go to Sir Michael, if you will—denounce me, do—and I will swear to him that you are a liar—a madman—he will believe me before you. I gained his heart, his soul, his unbounded confidence, and before there is the felon’s dock for me, there shall be the maniac’s cell for you. Ah, ha ! What think you now ?

George. That you are a fool, that passion blinds your judgment and your sense. You forget, madam, that I have a friend here, his name is Robert Audley, he is devoted to me, and to serve me would sacrifice himself. I am not so helpless as you imagine, did any harm befall me, woe, woe, to the guilty one !

Lady A. (*aside*) Robert Audley, his friend !

George. You see I am not so easily got rid of.

Lady A. (*aside*) We shall see—I have offer’d a bribe, I have used threats. I must now employ cunning.

George. (*seizing her by the wrist*) Come.

Lady A. One moment. I will accompany you if you will let me be a few seconds to myself, so that I may send a few lines in my tablets to Sir Michael, saying I shall never see him more.

George. Well, be quick then. (*music, piano, to end of act*)

Lady A. I will. (*GEORGE goes up, and as his back is turned she goes to the well, takes off the iron handle, and conceals it in her right hand behind her—aside*) It is mine ! that is one point gained—now for the second. (*aloud, pretending faintness*) Water, water, for mercy’s sake ! (*GEORGE comes down*) My head burns like fire !

George. This is some trick to escape me ; but I will not leave you.

Lady A. I do not wish you to. Stoop down and dip this in the well, (*gives him her white handkerchief*) that I may bathe my

throbbing temples. (GEORGE takes handkerchief and goes to well) Quick, quick !

George. (*stooping down to well*) It is the last service I shall render you. (LADY A. *creeps up behind him unperceived.*)

Lady A. (*striking him with the iron handle*) It is indeed—die ! (*pushes him down the well, the ruined stones fall with him*) He is gone—gone ! and no one was a witness to the deed !

Luke. (*looking on, R. U. E.*) Except me ! (*aside*)

Lady A. (*exulting*) Dead men tell no tales ! I am free ! I am free ! I am free !—Ha, ha, ha ! (*raising her arms in triumph, laughing exultingly*—LUKE looks on, watching her as the drop falls)

END OF ACT FIRST.

ACT II.

Scene First.—*The Conservatory in Audley House. Stained windows, and door in flat. Flower stands R. and L., with plants in pots.*

Enter SIR MICHAEL and ALICIA, door in flat.

Sir M. Patience, patience ! Robert will keep his word, never fear.

Alicia. But I do fear. He thinks more of his absent friend than he does of me. I find him melancholy to a degree. He's always so deeply plunged in thought that one might as well speak to the doorpost.

Sir M. He can't help thinking of the disappearance of his friend, and I must confess it is a most mysterious circumstance. A gentleman visits my mansion, and, after he has been here an hour or two, he suddenly disappears, and not a creature can find out where he has gone. Robert has paid detectives and advertised in every paper, both London and Provincial, without success. I'm getting to feel as anxious as Robert on the subject. I don't like such a mysterious circumstance being connected with Audley Court, I promise you.

Alicia. Nor I ; for Robert and I would have been married before this, if this mysterious circumstance, as you call it, had not taken place. It always seems ominous if a wedding's postponed. Oh, father, suppose I shouldn't be married at all—suppose Robert changes his mind !

Sir M. Absurd. Robert is too much a man of honor.

Alicia. Yes, but he tells me he will never call me wife till he has learned what has become of his friend ; and, if he never learns, I shall never be married. Father, would you wish to have an old maid in the family ?

Sir M. I might have something worse.

Alicia. There *can't* be anything worse. *I*, an old maid, doomed to make pets of parrots, canaries, and tortoiseshell cats. Oh, frightful doom ! I could go into hysterics at the very thought !

Sir M. We must have patience in matrimonial matters, my dear.

Alicia. *You* didn't have much patience then, papa ! for you'd no sooner lost one wife, than you began to look about for another. Surely a father who has had *two wives*, shouldn't begrudge his daughter *one husband*.

Sir M. My dear, what the deuce would you have me do ? Pray have a little reason.

Alicia. I can't ; a woman in love is never expected to have any reason at all. I'm surprised, papa, you don't know better.

Sir M. Well, well, I'll speak to Robert ; or, I'll tell you a better plan, Lady Audley shall talk to him.

Enter LADY AUDLEY *at back*.

Alicia. Lady Audley needn't trouble herself. Although she's my mother-in-law, I'm getting to dislike her more and more every day.

Lady A. (*aside*) Indeed ?

Alicia. I don't believe she's sincere in her regards. She smiles and coaxes you, it's true ; but I sometimes fancy her looks are like the sunbeams on a river, which make us forget the dark depths which lie hidden beneath the surface.

Sir M. Silence, Alicia, I command you ! I will not have Lady Audley spoken of in this manner—let me hear no more of it.

Lady A. (*advancing, c.*) Oh ! let the dear girl go on, I can forgive her—we shall know each other better by-and-bye. Still it is unpleasant for me to be aware that my affection for your dear daughter is not reciprocated.

Alicia. Listeners never hear any good of themselves.

Sir M. Really, Alicia, you are growing impertinent.

Lady A. Oh ! never heed her, my dear Sir Michael, my great regard for *you* enables me to overlook a little asperity in her.

Sir M. (*to* LADY AUDLEY) Well, you see, my dear, Alicia is vexed because her marriage is postponed ; but this strange disappearance of Robert's friend Mr. George Talboys, has quite upset my nephew.

Lady A. And no wonder—whatever can have become of the gentleman ? I hope he has fallen into no danger—I should be so sorry.

Sir M. I know you would, my dear, but I'll go with you, Alicia, and talk to Robert, perhaps he may have heard tidings of his friend by this time, so let us ascertain. I shall soon return, my dear. (*to LADY AUDLEY*) Good-bye for the present, my dear.

Lady A. Adieu, my love, don't stay long. (*kissing him*)

Alicia. (*aside*) What an easy, good-natured fool my father is. I've no patience with him. (*taking his arm*) Come along, do, papa. (*pulling him up stage*)

Sir M. I'm coming, my dear—I'm coming!

Alicia. But you're so slow, and I'm in a hurry, do make haste—I've no patience.

Sir M. I know you haven't, my dear.

Alicia. Quick then, quick! (*Exit with SIR MICHAEL, hastily, C.*)

Lady A. Six months have passed, and no one guesses the fate of George Talboys—how should they? The secret is here, here, hidden in my own breast forever. Robert Audley is sparing no pains to discover his dear friend. I'm afraid he'll not be successful—he little thinks he daily passes the spot where the body lies. I wish I could banish the remembrance of the fatal meeting from my mind, but I cannot. By day I think of it, and at night I can fancy he is before me in the solitude of my chamber, when sleep should be sealing my eyelids and rest bring me repose—repose, did I say? I know it not, but I *will*; these abject fears and whisperings of conscience shall be hushed. I am Lady Audley, powerful, rich, and unsuspected, with not one living witness to rise up against me. (*going up*)

Enter LUKE MARKS, C., flushed with drink.

How now, fellow?

Luke. How now, madam?

Lady A. You have no business here.

Luke. How do you know?

Lady A. (*points off, R. C.*) Begone.

Luke. (*taking garden chair and sitting*) I won't.

Lady A. Then the servants shall make you. (*going up*)

Luke. (*rises*) Stay, if any one hears what I'm going to say to you, you're a doomed woman

Lady A. (*coming down*) What do you mean?

Luke. (*chuckling*) I knows, what I knows.

Lady A. Well, and what is that?

Luke. (*going up to her*) Enough to hang thee. (*she starts*) Do you want me to go now?

Lady A. (*aside*) What can he know? (*aloud*) Speak.

Luke. Sometimes people sees *us* when we don't see *them*. Of course you know the old well in the lime-tree walk, and what be at the bottom of it?

Lady A. Ah! do you know—

Luke. All! I saw thee push him in—*dead* men tell no tales, but *live* ones may, so if my mouth be not stopped I may open it.

Lady A. You cannot want money, for when you were married to Phœbe, four months ago, I supplied her liberally—put you both into the inn at Mount Stanning, and trusted you would do well.

Luke. Oh! we shall do well enough—we *must* when we have a banker like *you* to draw upon. Phœbe knows nothing of what I saw thee do, and nobody shall know, if you always give me what I want.

Lady A. (*aside*) Oh, cursed juggling fate! I have only destroyed one witness, to see another rise up before me.

Luke. (*aside*) I've staggered her—she finds I'm a clincher.

Lady A. We must be friends.

Luke. Aye, it wouldn't do for us to be enemies; at least I don't think it would answer your purpose. Come, tip up. (*holds out his hand*)

Lady A. What money do you expect?

Luke. A hundred pounds will do now.

Lady A. I'll bring it to your house; I have not so much with me.

Luke. And when will you bring the money?

Lady A. At dusk, you'll not have long to wait.

Luke. (*going up*) Neither will I, so mind; I must have thy money, or the world shall have thy secret. **Exit, C.**

Lady A. How can I get rid of that man? shall a boor, a drunkard, a ruffian, hold me in his grasp ready to crush me when he pleases? How do I know, even if I bribe him into silence, that in some drunken moment he may not tell all he knows? What shall I do? Some one may see him leaving here! I wonder if he has passed the gates? (*looks off, R. C.*) Ah! here comes Robert Audley, he must not see me with a cloud upon my brow! let me again resume the mask, which not only imposes on him, but on all the world. (*sits R. and with a pair of scissors, seems busily engaged in trimming the flowers in pots on stand*)

Enter ROBERT AUDLEY, C. dressed in mourning.

Robert. Six months have passed, and yet no tidings of George; he cannot be living, or he must have seen the advertisements that I have inserted, begging him to communicate with me. If he had died suddenly, some one would have given information of his death. What motive could there have been in concealing it?

Lady A. (*looking up smiling*) Ah, Mr. Audley, you have returned then? I heard you were in London. (*trims flowers on stand during this scene*)

Robert. I returned an hour ago.

Lady A. Well, any news of your friend ?

Robert. None.

Lady A. How strange.

Robert. Very strange !

Lady A. Let me see ; what was his name ?

Robert. George Talboys, madam.

Lady A. To be sure. I knew it was some " boys," but whether *Talboys*, or *Shortboys*, I really couldn't remember.

Robert. You seem to treat the subject very lightly, Lady Audley !

Lady A. You are mistaken. I have thought more about your friend, than you would give me credit for ; the poor fellow has committed suicide no doubt. I daresay his wife's death preyed upon his mind.

Robert. How did you know he had ever been married ?

Lady A. Oh, he told me.

Robert. I was not aware he had been so communicative to you.

Lady A. Were you not ? oh yes, he spoke of his wife, poor fellow. And as he is now dead beyond doubt——

Robert. How do you know he's dead beyond doubt ?

Lady A. Of course I don't *know*—how should I ? but it is only natural to think so.

Robert. You have no *other* reasons for thinking so, then ?

Lady A. (*laughing*) Why, what a curious fellow you are, you cross-examine one like a lawyer, but an open-hearted creature like me, has little talent for concealment. I am one of those silly beings, Mr. Audley, who have a weakness for telling all they know and all they hear—just like the women, isn't it.

Robert. I should not have thought *you* one of that class, my lady.

Lady A. Oh ! but I am—ask Sir Michael. Are you fond of flowers, Mr. Audley ?

Robert. Very, but the flower I most value you do not seem to possess.

Lady A. And that is——

Robert. *Heart's-ease !*

Lady A. (*aside*) What does he mean ? (*aloud*) Heart's ease ? Well, you see, Mr. Audley, I have so much of my own that I can afford to dispense with its botanical namesake.

Robert. Indeed ! I have remarked lately that you have been very *ill* at ease.

Lady A. How kind of you to watch my health so closely. I fancied I was looking remarkably well.

Robert. You *appear* so, but you are not ; your eyes are not half so bright as they were when I first came here—still I grant

you they may be as sharp. Your manner is more anxious—you fall into deep reflection, and sometimes do not answer until you have been twice spoken to, then you suddenly rally and assume a levity which is forced and unnatural in my eyes.

Lady A. Oh ! in your eyes—one would think such observation very impertinent were they to attach any importance to it.

Robert. Madam, George Talboys was my friend.

Lady A. Well, but he wasn't mine—why do you bore *me* about the fellow ? I thought you such an agreeable young man when you first came here ; pray change the subject.

Robert. No, madam, I am chained to it, bound to it like a slave. I feel certain my friend has perished treacherously, that some one's hand was raised against his life, and fell fatally on my poor and unsuspecting friend.

Lady A. Ah ! friendship is a very sacred tie, no doubt.

Robert. (*taking chair and sitting by her side*) So is marriage.

Lady A. (*repeating his words carelessly*) So is marriage. (*aside*) What is coming now ?

Robert. George Talboys' wife was very like you, Lady Audley.

Lady A. Indeed—such resemblances will occur. She died young, I believe.

Robert. I question whether she died at all.

Lady A. Why ?

Robert. Because if she did she lives again in you.

Lady A. Ah ! you said just now I resembled her—when, pray, did you ever see George Talboys' wife ?

Robert. I *never* saw her ; but, amongst my poor friend's luggage left at the hotel, I found this miniature, set in a locket. (*shows it*) Madam, this is *your* likeness.

Lady A. (*starts up*) Prove it !

Robert. I have a further proof. Since I have been here, I have remarked your handwriting closely, and compared it with this letter, (*produces one*) found with this likeness. You are Helen Talboys, and can tell me the fate of my friend. He has not been seen since he met you in the Lime-Tree walk ; and, I tell you plainly, he has disappeared, either through your means or those of your accomplices ; but I will find him, either living or dead ; if *living*, you shall meet the punishment of a bigamist ; if *dead*, the fate of a murderess.

Lady A. (*with fury*) Fool ! why do you wage war with me—why do you make me your enemy ? Tremble, if I am ; for, if we are foes, I *must* triumph over you. Do you hear ? *must*—for victory yields me safety—defeat, death ! Even if your suspicions are right, what good will it do you ? I will tell you ; it will break your uncle's heart, and disgrace his family, tarnish the escutcheon of the proud Audley family, and leave a stain on the race forever.

Robert. (*aside*) She is right. I did not think of that.

Lady A. Take my advice, and keep your suspicions to yourself ; reflect, are we to be friends or foes ?

Robert. Foes. Lady Audley, you must leave here ; no one must know your destination ; do this, and you are safe. I will give you until to-morrow to reflect. Agree to this, and I will be silent ; refuse, and I will tell all, and let the law have its own.

Exit, C.

Lady A. Closer and closer around me, seems to draw the circle, which threatens to bind me within its folds. Shall I yield to his menaces, and leave rank, wealth, and position because he merely suspects me ? No ; my motto has, hitherto, been death or victory ; and to that end I am fixed. (*going up, meets SIR MICHAEL and ALICIA re-entering*) Ah ! my dear Sir Michael—my dear Alicia ! I have been so lonely without you. (*with a sudden change of manner*)

Alicia. Not very lonely, I should think, when my cousin Robert has been with you. (*aside*) He's smitten with her ; I know he is.

Sir M. What the deuce does the girl mean ? Can't my nephew speak to my wife without all this hubbub ?

Alicia. It depends upon what subjects he speaks.

Lady A. (*aside*) A good idea. I'll work upon it.

Sir M. And pray, my dear, do you think my nephew would be so ungentlemanly as to speak upon any subjects to Lady Audley, except those of duty and respect ?

Alicia. I know he's struck with her, father, and she with him.

Sir M. Lady Audley, you hear what this silly, jealous girl says. Pray, set her doubts at rest.

Lady A. (*sighs*) I wish I could ; but the fact is, my dear husband, Mr. Robert Audley is *too* agreeable—*too* fond of my society.

Alicia. I knew it—I knew it. Oh, papa ! isn't it shameful of him ?

Sir M. I'm amazed.

Lady A. I took him to be such a nice, gentlemanly young man ; but how we may be mistaken. The fact is, Sir Michael, I think it would be better—much better—if Mr. Robert left here at once. I feel embarrassed in his presence, and——

Sir M. And shall be so no longer ; he shall leave here this very night.

Lady A. But pray don't mention my name in the matter.

Sir M. No, no, I'll not give him any reasons. I'll get rid of him the best way I can.

Lady A. (*to SIR MICHAEL*) My dear kind considerate old angel. (*kissing him*) I love you more and more every day, And you, my poor girl, how shamefully has Robert treated you. Come

with me, and I'll tell you such things about him, that will, I'm sure, prevent you ever again speaking to him.

Alicia. (*weeping*) Oh, the false, deceitful, perfidious, perjured, profligate!

Lady A. Dry your tears, my dear; he's not worth thinking about. Send him away at once, Sir Michael; of all things in the world, I hate hypocrisy the most. Come, my dear, come; forget the base fellow, forget him.

Alicia. I will, I will—oh, the artful crocodile!

Exeunt LADY AUDLEY, and ALICIA, R. I E.

Sir M. Now, if I were like some husbands, I should be jealous of this precious nephew of mine; but with a woman like Lady Audley, I am so perfectly sure of my family honor remaining pure and unsullied, that I can lay comfort to my heart, and hold her up as a paragon of goodness to all the world. Oh! here comes the scapegrace.

Re-enter ROBERT, C.

I wished to see you, Robert. I want you to go to London to-night.

Robert. To London?

Sir M. Well, to leave here at any rate; it will be better for all parties.

Robert. What is the matter? You look disturbed. Has anything unpleasant occurred? How can I serve you?

Sir M. By doing as I have told you. Take this. (*gives note*) That will pay your expenses. My honor, my peace demands your absence from here at once, nephew. I will write to you and explain my meaning more fully. Go, go! I believe your head to be in error, not your heart. Not a word, but obey me, or we may never be friends again—go, go, go.

Exit SIR MICHAEL, L. U. E.

Robert. This is strange. Ah! I comprehend, this is Lady Audley's work; she has been influencing my uncle against me. No matter, I will leave to-night, or it may be the means of still further prejudicing him against me; but I will not go far—no, I will be near at hand to watch my lady, and if needs be to show her to the world in her true colors.

Exit, C.

LADY AUDLEY *looks on*, R.

Lady A. Yonder he goes; I have gained one point; now, to see Luke Marks and strive for the second.

Exit, C.

Scene Second.—*Exterior of the Castle Inn, at Mount Stanning, painted on flat—First grooves.*

Enter PHOEBE *now the wife of Luke—looks from door towards*, R.

Phœbe. What a time Luke has gone, where can he be? I fear he'll fall into the river some dark night when these drinking fits are on him. My lady very kindly put us in this Inn, but it has done us little good; Luke only insults the customers, and drinks all the spirits himself. I made a sad day's work of it when I married him. (*LUKE sings without, R.*) Here he comes, and in his usual state! How will this wretched life end?

Enter LUKE, R., intoxicated.

Luke. Is that you, Phœbe?

Phœbe. Yes, Luke; what a time you have been! The landlord has been here for his rent.

Luke. And he shall have it; everybody shall have everything; leave it all to me, I'll pay 'em.

Phœbe. But where will you get the money?

Luke. From a gold mine, a perfect gold mine, that I've only got to draw on when I like.

Phœbe. What do you mean?

Luke. What's that got to do wi' you? You leave me to mind my own business, and I warrant I'll make my lady come down whenever I like.

Phœbe. Do you mean my Lady Audley?

Luke. Of course I do. She's coming here to-night to bring me some money; aye, and she shall come again and again whenever I choose to send for her.

Phœbe. You have been drinking, Luke, and don't know what you say.

Luke. Don't I? If you only knew your book as well as I know mine, you could play as winning a game.

Phœbe. But I don't understand——

Luke. Nobody wants you to, I tell thee, my lass. We can afford to let this ramshackle shed of a paltry inn go to sack as fast as it likes; we'll live as gentlefolks, and do nought—nought but eat, drink, and enjoy ourselves.

Phœbe. Go in, Luke, and lie down, you are not yourself.

Luke. Bean't I? We'll see about that. You don't seem to believe me; but I tell thee, if I liked, I could bring my lady down on her marrow bones afore me, aye, afore me, Luke Marks, the drunkard, the scamp, and the idler, as folks call him.

Phœbe. Go in, Luke, go in. I see Mr. Robert coming. (*looking, R.*)

Luke. Let him come. I don't value his opinion a rush. I knows what I knows, and means to make the most on't.

Enter ROBERT AUDLEY, R.

Robert. I want to lodge in your house to-night, Luke. I've left the Hall.

Luke and Phœbe. Left the Hall?

Robert. Aye, there is a little difference between my uncle and myself, but I don't want to leave the neighborhood until after to-morrow ; so if you can accommodate me, I'll put up with any fare you can give me.

Phœbe. It will only be very humble, Mr. Robert.

Robert. No matter ; humble and honest is better any day than fine fare and falsehood.

Phœbe. I'll make you as comfortable as I can, depend upon it, sir. **Exit to Inn.**

Luke. I see how it be ; you and fine madam up yonder can't stable your horses together, I reckon. Oh, she be a proud dame, but let her look out, or may be her pride may have a fall.

Robert. I saw you coming from the Hall not long ago.

Luke. Aye, I had been to see her.

Robert. Will you excuse me asking you what your business was with Lady Audley ?

Luke. No, I won't excuse thee. I'm not going to make any man as wise as myself, so as he can kill my goose for the sake of the golden eggs. No, no.

Robert. (*aside*) What can he know regarding Lady Audley ? Something that would serve me, perhaps. (*aloud*) Luke, tell me your secret, and I will give you ten guineas.

Luke. Tell you my secret for ten guineas, when I can get one hundred for keeping it ? Not likely.

Robert. But suppose you should be made to tell it ?

Luke. "Made !" who can do that ? not you. Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is a better.

Robert. (*aside*) I see soft words will go farther than hard ones with this fellow. (*aloud*) Well, we'll change the subject, Luke, and you shall join me in a mug of ale. You'll find that more to your palate, I reckon.

Luke. Ecod ! you reckon right. Since I've been landlord here I've had ale for breakfast, ale for lunch, ale for dinner, ale for tea, and ale for supper.

Robert. You'll drink away all your profits, Luke.

Luke. A straw for the profits. I don't depend on this place to keep me, but upon what I knows.

Robert. (*aside*) If I ply him with drink, I may get it out of him. (*aloud*) This is dry work, let's get inside, Luke. I'll pay for all we have to-night.

Luke. Then you're a Briton. Come in, a gentleman like you be always welcome, 'specially when he pays for all. (*calls within*) Phœbe ! Phœbe ! draw a quart of ale from the third barrel ; ecod ! she can't draw it from any other, 'cos they be all empty. (*aside*) Follow me, sir, (*aloud*) I feel honored by your company, I do indeed. The ale, Phœbe ; the ale, my lass.

Exit to Inn.

Robert. Something seems to whisper in my ear that this fellow knows something of my friend's fate. I'll watch him like a lynx, and if I once get on the scent, never will I leave it till the guilty are hunted down.

Exit to Inn.

Enter LADY AUDLEY, in cloak and hood, R.

Lady A. This is one of the curses of my position—to be obliged to wait on this drunken animal, and endure his brutal taunts and insolent threats. Well, I must bide my time. I cannot hope to break the net that clings around me by a single effort, I must proceed cautiously. (*knocks at door—PHŒBE comes out.*)

Phœbe. Good evening, my lady. Luke told me you were coming.

Lady A. Indeed ; and did he tell you *why* I was coming ?

Phœbe. To bring some money, he said.

Lady A. For what ?

Phœbe. He did not say.

Lady A. Are you sure ?

Phœbe. I am. Surely, my lady, you don't think I'd tell you a falsehood after your kindness to us.

Lady A. Where is your husband now ?

Phœbe. In the bar, drinking with Mr. Robert Audley.

Lady A. Robert Audley here ? and in your husband's company ?

Phœbe. Yes ; and talking about some secret matter I should fancy, by the way they whisper to each other.

Lady A. (*aside*) If Luke should betray me !

Phœbe. Will you walk in, my lady ? you can come into my room, without any one seeing you.

Lady A. Yes, I will come in for a few moments ; but not a word to Robert Audley of my being here.

Phœbe. Depend on me, my lady. This way, madam.

Exit into Inn.

Lady A. Robert Audley is bent on my destruction ; if I do not crush him, he will crush me—two of my foes are within—two against one. I may be over-matched ; but I am not yet overcome.

Exit into Inn—Music.

Scene Third.—*A divided Scene of two rooms ; in R. a table, chairs, and flight of steps, supposed to lead to a hayloft, in C. flat ; a door piece, R., and key in it ; in L. room, table, chair, and window in flat, showing moonlight perspective.*

ROBERT and LUKE drinking at table in R. room ; a candle on table ; LUKE smoking.

Luke. And that's how the case stands ; what I knows I means

to let no one else know. You won't get to the bottom of me as easily as I shall get to the bottom of this. (*draining tankard*)

Robert. (*aside*) It will have to be a work of time with this fellow. If I could find a pretext for staying here a few days longer, in some of his drunken moments he might disclose all. I'll not be daunted. No, George Talboys, whether you be alive or dead, I am firm to my purpose to see justice done you.

Luke. What be thee muttering about ? this be slow work ; sing us a song.

Robert. No, no, it's getting late.

Luke. What o' that ? this be my house, the Castle—and as every Englishman's house be his Castle, in course I be master of the Castle, and I say—(*rising*) How the Castle be going round—my castle be turning into a windmill, I do fancy. (*staggering*) Phœbe, Phœbe—(*calling*)—another tankard of ale.

Robert. (*rising*) No, no, not to-night.

Luke. I can't sleep without it, it be my nightcap. I think Phœbe has followed the example o' my pipe and gone out. Phœbe, I say ! (*calling and trying to light his pipe from candle on table. After several attempts to do so through the following speech of ROBERT'S, he sinks down with his head on table asleep*)

Robert. The more I think of it, the more I'm convinced this man is concerned in the disappearance of George Talboys. He is too far gone to-night for me to question him. He scorned my first bribe ; my second must be larger. On what other plan can I hit ? I'll consider it over a cigar. (*Music—takes out cigar case and lights cigar.*)

Enter PHŒBE and LADY AUDLEY, L. room.

Lady A. Not a word to Robert Audley that I am here.

Phœbe. Not a word.

Lady A. Send your husband to me.

Phœbe. I will, my lady, if he's in a fit state.

Lady A. Fit or not, I must see him. I must have no more of his visits to the Hall. Go.

Phœbe. I don't think you'll be able to make any sense of him. (*Exit into R. room and shakes LUKE.*) Luke ! Luke !

Robert. He's too far gone in drink, my dear, to pay any attention to you ; and as I don't find him very lively company, I'll go to bed if you please. (*rises*)

Phœbe. Certainly, sir. (*lights another candle which she takes from small table or chimney-piece.*) It's not the sort of chamber you have been used to, sir.

Robert. It's immaterial to me : an honest man can sleep as sound on straw as on down.

Phœbe. This is the room, sir.

Exit, R. door, followed by ROBERT.

LADY AUDLEY *peeps into R. room.*

Lady A. (*looking at LUKE*) Phœbe was right. I don't think I *shall* be able to make any sense of him. So Robert Audley sleeps in yonder room—would he slept his last! How am I to arouse this brute without Robert Audley hearing me? I had better wait here until he sleeps.

Re-enter PHŒBE, R. door, without candle.

Phœbe. I wish you could call in the morning, or leave word with me what you would have Luke do.

Lady A. No, this is the only time I have, it is impossible to say where I may be to-morrow. I want you to walk part of the way home with me. Go on the road and I'll overtake you.

Phœbe. But I'm afraid to leave Luke when he's in drink: he may set the house on fire.

Lady A. (*aside, starting*) The "house on fire!" a good idea. (*aloud*) Go, go, good Phœbe; if your husband is too far gone to listen to me, I will soon overtake you. Go, go, I say.

Phœbe. (*aside*) Whatever can she have to say to Luke.

Exit L.—Music.

Lady A. (*looking towards R. door*) I wonder if he sleeps. (*Music—she peeps in at R. door, and speaks through Music*) All seems quiet. (*locks R. door*) He's safe. I have but one terrible agent to aid me, and that is fire. (*Music—takes up candle—goes to hayloft—looks into and enters it—The reflection of fire is seen within—she re-enters, and places candle on table—locks the door which parts the rooms in center, and Exit, L. door. The fire grows stronger, and LUKE wakes up*)

Luke. Why, what is this?—fire. Phœbe, Phœbe! Help, help! (*tries to open door which parts the rooms*) Why, it is fast. Phœbe, Phœbe, I say. Ah! I may escape by this room. (*goes to R. door, and tries it*) Why, that be fast too. Oh, mercy—mercy! help, help! The fire grows stronger and stronger. Oh, mercy—mercy! Great Heaven—I know I've been a bad and wicked man, but oh, save me! Save me, some one. I choke—I choke! I die—I die! Mercy! help! mercy! (*Music—staggers up and falls, as scene is closed in*)

Scene Fourth.—The road through Audley Park, (1st grooves).

Enter PHŒBE, L.

Phœbe. I can't understand at all why my lady sent me on ~~first~~, What could she have to say to Luke, that she feared my hearing? I dared not ask her, for she's a strange woman, and I did not like to question her. I wish I'd never left her service, to marry Luke; but I had promised him, and thought marriage would reform him! but that's a hopeless task, for every day sees him sink deeper and deeper in dissipation. I'll get a little farther

this way

on the road. I suppose Lady Audley won't be long before she overtakes me. (*going R.*) Why, who comes here? Why, I declare, if it isn't Miss Audley; and what deep trouble she seems in.

Music.

Enter ALICIA, R.

Alicia. Is that you Phœbe?

Phœbe. Yes, Miss.

Alicia. Oh, I'm so glad to see you! My father, my poor father! he has been struck down by a terrible fit, and his speech is fast leaving him. Oh! where can Lady Audley be—where is Robert? He asks for them so anxiously; his only wish is to see them. They tell me Robert was seen going towards your inn—is he there?

Phœbe. Yes—yes.

Alicia. Oh, go to him! quick—quick; pray do. I must hasten back, for I am in suspense—in agony—away from my father. Oh, haste, Phœbe, haste!

Exit R.

Phœbe. I will—I will, Miss. I must let my lady know of this. (*going L. meets LADY AUDLEY entering*) Oh, my lady, such sad news! Sir Michael has been taken suddenly—dangerously ill. He wishes to see you and Mr. Audley instantly—instantly, my lady.

Lady A. Can this be true—who told you?

Phœbe. Miss Alicia. She was going to our house, to seek Mr. Robert.

Lady A. (*aside*). How lucky she did not; she might have given the alarm of fire, and saved him.

Phœbe. Let me run instantly, and inform him, my lady. (*going L., LADY AUDLEY seizes her by the wrist*)

Lady A. No, stay you here; I will go.

Phœbe. (*looks off, L.*) Oh, look! look, my lady! there is a fire in the direction of our house.

Lady A. Nonsense, nonsense; it is quite a contrary way—in the direction of Brentwood, I should say.

Phœbe. No, no; I am certain it is at Mount Stanning, my lady. I must, I will go to be satisfied.

Lady A. You shall not. Come with me to the Hall, I may require you. Did you not say just now, girl, that Sir Michael was dangerously ill?

Phœbe. But I have a husband also, madam; and, bad as he is, it is my duty to see to his safety.

Lady A. Let the drunken sot perish if he will. He is a curse, a disgrace to you and—

Phœbe. And therefore not fit to die. Why do you hold me? Why do you wish to prevent me returning home? You have some wicked motive, I can see it in your eye.

Lady A. You are mistaken, girl.

Phœbe. No ; I feel convinced I am right. I see it all now. Luke was the possessor of some terrible secret ; you wished him out of the way, and Mr. Robert too. That was your motive for wishing me to leave you alone at the inn. Oh ! cruel, wicked woman ! what did my husband know of you that you should wish him dead ?

Lady A. He knew too much, but now he is silenced.

Phœbe. But I am not ! I will denounce you to justice—I will proclaim you as a murderess ! Help ! help ! Murder ! Help ! help !

Lady A. Silence ! Come !—come !—come ! *Music.*

Phœbe. Never, never. Help ! help ! (*LADY AUDLEY drags her off, resisting, R.*)

Scene Fifth.—*The Lime Tree Avenue and Well, as in ACT I. Moonlight, which falls on the old Well.*

PHOEBE is heard without calling for help, and is dragged on by
LADY AUDLEY, R. 2 E.

Lady A. Come, come. To the Hall ! to the Hall !

Phœbe. No, I will not ; you mean mischief towards me, I am sure you do.

Lady A. No, girl, no ; I am your friend.

Enter ROBERT AUDLEY, *who, coming between them from L. takes PHOEBE from LADY AUDLEY'S grasp.*

Robert. (*to PHOEBE*) Away to your husband, girl, and see if there is any help for him.

Phœbe. Thank you, bless you, sir. *Exit hastily, L.*

Robert. (*to LADY AUDLEY*) Now, madam, we will come to a reckoning.

Lady A. (*recoils from him*) Alive !

Robert. Aye, to punish and expose you. You thought to trap me, to silence me, by dooming me to a dreadful death. But Heaven be praised I was not sleeping when your wicked hands set fire to the house. No, I live to be your fate, and the avenger of my friend.

Lady A. What will you do ?—proceed without evidence ? And who are *you* that dare accuse me ? Who are you that oppose yourself to me so constantly. I have wealth, boundless wealth, and I will use it to crush you—to crush you, Robert Audley.

Robert. How ?

Lady A. Thus ! (*rushes towards him with poignard, he wrenches it from her hand*)

Robert. And thus I rob the serpent of its sting !

Lady A. Let me pass.

Robert. Never ! the law shall have its own.

Lady A. And who is to be my accuser ?

Enter LUKE, supported by PEASANTS and PHŒBE, L.

Luke. I, thank Heaven ! I am spared to do an act of justice before I end my guilty life. I accuse that woman of——

Robert. No ! hold, hold. It will be better not to cast a stain upon my uncle's name. Say nothing I beg, I entreat of you.

Luke. Then I will be silent, silent for ever—ever—ever. (*falls back in the arms of the PEASANTS*)

Lady A. (*aside*) He is dead, and I shall triumph over them all. (*the great bell of the Castle is now heard tolling*)

Enter ALICIA from back, followed by SERVANTS.

Alicia. Robert ! Robert ! my father is dead. Oh, pity me ! pity and protect me ! (*goes to ROBERT*)

Robert. Sir Michael dead ! Now vengeance take thy own ! Friends, hear me :—I accuse that woman of the murder of my friend, George Talboys.

Lady A. How and where ?

Luke. (*revives*) I—I will tell that. She pushed him down that well, (*points to well, all start*) but it will be useless to search there now, for George Talboys is——

Enter GEORGE TALBOYS, R. 2 E.

George. Here ! (*LUKE falls back dead*)

Omnes. Alive !

Lady A. (*petrified*) Alive ! alive ! you alive !

George. Back, woman ! and thank that man (*points to LUKE*) that you have not my death upon your soul. You will be scorned, loathed, and despised by all. The blow you struck me rendered me an invalid for months. I have been silent until to-day, because I gave my word to that poor, dying wretch. (*points to LUKE*) But now I am free—free to tell all. Speak to her, speak to her, Robert, and say I forgive her. (*points to LADY AUDLEY*)

Robert. (*to LADY AUDLEY*) You hear, woman !

Lady A. (*vacantly*) But I do not heed. I have a rich husband. They told me he was dead—but no, they lied—see—see, he stands there ! Your arm—your arm, Sir Michael. We will leave this place—we will travel. Never heed what the world says—I have no husband but you—none—none ! It is time to depart, the carriage is waiting. Come—come—come !

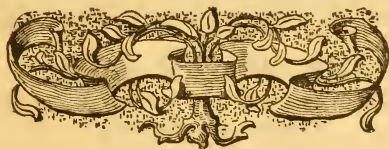
George. What does she mean, Robert ?

Robert. Mean ! Do you not see she is mad ?

Omnes. (*retreating from her*) Mad !

Lady A. Aye—aye! (*laughs wildly*) Mad, mad, that is the word. I feel it here—here! (*places her hands on her temples*) Do not touch me—do not come near me—let me claim your silence—your pity—and let the grave, the cold grave, close over Lady Audley and her Secret. (*falls—dies—Music—tableau of sympathy—GEORGE TALBOYS kneels over her*)

CURTAIN.



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ACT III.—The angel child.—Tom and St. Clare.—Topsy's mischief.—Eva's request.—The promise.—pathetic scene.—Death of Eva.—St. Clare's grief.—“For thou art gone forever.”

ACT IV.—The lonely house.—Tom and St. Clare.—Topsy's keepsake.—Deacon Perry and Aunt Ophelia.—Cute on deck.—A distant relative.—The hungry visitor.—Chuck full of emptiness.—Cute and the Deacon.—A row.—A fight.—Topsy to the rescue.—St. Clare wounded.—Death of St. Clare.—“Eva—Eva—I am coming”

ACT V.—Legree's plantation on the Red River.—Home again.—Uncle Tom's noble heart.—“My soul ain't yours, Mas'r.”—Legree's cruel work.—Legree and Cassy.—The white slave.—A frightened brute.—Legree's fear.—A life of sin.—Marks and Cute.—A new scheme.—The dreadful whipping of Uncle Tom.—Legree punished at last.—Death of Uncle Tom.—Eva in Heaven.

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